HEALTHY FOOD FOR ALL
A Community Food Security Plan for Douglas, Sarpy, and Pottawattamie Counties
2018

KEY COMPONENTS
INTRODUCTION

A strong community depends on an accessible and affordable food system – one that meets current food needs and builds capacity to provide healthy food for generations to come. Yet, in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro, approximately 100,810 people (12.5%) experience food insecurity, which means they do not consistently know where their next meal will come from. More troubling are the pockets of deep food insecurity that exist in northeast, southeast, and northwest Omaha, and portions of Pottawattamie County, where food insecurity rates can reach as high as 48.5%. Food insecurity is even more common among families with children. To address these issues, more than seventy partners from across the three county Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area have come together to produce Healthy Food for All – A Community Food Security Plan for Douglas, Sarpy, and Pottawattamie Counties, a plan which identifies four goals and multiple strategies to improve food security and health in the local community.

The Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area has been working on the challenge of community food insecurity for many years. This work has touched the lives of thousands across the region. Feeding hungry people, promoting consumption of healthy foods, and working across the lifespan to create food security for all is a goal shared by many organizations. However, within the food system, work often proceeds within silos, with partners within emergency food, health, and local foods working independently. An analysis of food security needs and assets conducted by United Way of the Midlands in 2017 concluded that despite the multitude of organizations and pantries working toward food security, greater impact would be seen through increased collaboration, sharing best practices, and the utilization of shared metrics. Often people who experience hunger also struggle with employment, housing, transportation, and health disparities. In addition, the food system – including how food is produced, distributed, and sold – impacts the nutritional quality of food and serves as a key economic driver of the community. By tackling issues from a systems-perspective, this plan creates a path forward to serve those currently experiencing food insecurity while laying the foundation to reduce food insecurity in the future. It calls for systems-level change and a deeper awareness of the many streams of work within community food security, as well as recognition of the broader social, economic, and environmental conditions that impact food security for local residents. It proposes clear goals, measures, and aligned strategies across coalitions, organizations, and focus areas, coordinating work and strategically using resources.

During the twelve-month planning process, United Way of the Midlands (UWM) served as a neutral facilitator to support the co-creation of a common agenda and mutually reinforcing activities. Douglas County Health Department, Food Bank for the Heartland, and No More Empty Pots served as strategic co-leads. Subject matter experts from public, private, and nonprofit organizations provided the strategic and thought leadership to craft the details of the plan. Broad stakeholder and community input throughout the process in the form of multiple workgroups, summits, and community input meetings ensured the plan aligned with community needs and incorporated the activities already

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Community Food Security: A condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance, social justice, and democratic decision-making.

**Long-Range Goals**

**Goal 1:** All community members have equitable and adequate access to nutritious food

**Goal 2:** Food is produced and distributed in ways that create a sustainable system that values workers, consumers, and the land

**Goal 3:** Community members have knowledge and skills to grow, select, and prepare nutritious food to maximize resources

**Goal 4:** Catalyze community change around food system challenges and root causes of hunger
being implemented by partners. USDA, Iowa West Foundation, and United Way of the Midlands provided funding for the planning process.

Given the broad scope and complexity of the issues included in the plan, a clear framework was developed to organize the multiple and interconnected components. Grounded in the vision statement and seven core values, the plan presents four long-range goals which each contain multiple priority areas for action. Where possible, priority areas for action are accompanied by an indicator that measures target community conditions. Aligned strategies, objectives, and activities within priority areas for action describe the specific work to be done by partners across the community and provide milestones to track progress. Goals and priority areas reflect long-term impacts, while the objectives and activities speak to the work to be done immediately or in the near future. The framework is pictured on the following page.

Above all, this plan represents a commitment by partners from multiple sectors to work toward shared, measurable community goals, and defines a formal structure to support this collaboration moving forward. The planning process created an opportunity to build bridges, strengthen relationships, and overcome historical challenges to collaboration. The top priority developed through the plan is to launch a food security collaborative that will be responsible for implementing the plan. This collaborative will continue to refine, develop, and prioritize the plan’s strategies and activities.

This document provides an overview of the key components of the plan. Specific activities are not described here; rather, an overview of the framework is shared as are salient points from each goal. The full plan, description of the planning process, and description of metrics can be found in Healthy Food for All – A Community Food Security Plan for Douglas, Sarpy, and Pottawattamie Counties, Full Report.

THE CHALLENGE

In the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area, approximately 100,810 (12.5%) people struggle with food insecurity. While overall food insecurity rates have been declining slightly in recent years, pockets of deep food insecurity persist. A closer look at the census tract level shows that nearly one third of census tracts have a food insecurity rate over 15%. Census tract 7 in zip code 68111 has the highest estimated food insecurity rate at 48.5%. Barriers to food security and healthy foods are not equitably distributed across the community. According to the Community Health Needs Assessment conducted in 2018, 21.2% of residents in northeast Omaha, 15.8% of residents in southeast Omaha, and 11.6% of residents in Pottawattamie County “often” or “sometimes” worry about food running out before having money to buy more, versus 11.3% in the metro overall. Douglas County consistently has the highest food insecurity rates in the metro, specifically the northeast, southeast, and northwest portions of Omaha.

Local research has revealed that those with lower food security are more likely to engage in coping behaviors, such as making trade-offs between purchasing food and paying other bills. When a household struggles with a variety of complex problems – such as poverty and food insecurity – difficult compromises can complicate existing problems. Having to choose between food and utilities or food and medical bills places families at risk for other serious issues, such as homelessness and poor health. Food insecure families make such trade-offs regularly.

Food insecurity and hunger affect health, work, and school. It is difficult for people to function, learn, and reach their full potential if they don’t have the necessary fuel. This is particularly true for children, whose households experience food insecurity at a higher rate than the overall population. Children at risk for hunger may struggle in school due to behavioral issues or social difficulties and are at greater risk for truancy and school tardiness.
**VISION**

We envision a food-secure community where every person in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area has access to an adequate supply of nutritious, affordable and culturally-appropriate food to be productive members of our community.

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**LONG-RANGE GOAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>LONG-RANGE GOAL</th>
<th>PRIORITY AREA FOR ACTION</th>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>All community members have equitable and adequate access to nutritious food.</td>
<td>Make Food Friendly Neighborhoods</td>
<td>Total mileage with access to WIC-approved vendors via local health departments</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Feed Hungry People</td>
<td>Food Insecurity via Feeding America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Food is produced and distributed in ways that create a sustainable system that values workers, consumers, and the land.</td>
<td>Increase Ability to Feed Ourselves as a Community</td>
<td>Direct-to-consumer sales of local foods via USDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Minimize Food Waste</td>
<td>No community indicator currently available</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Expand Opportunities to Develop High Skill, High Wage Food System Jobs</td>
<td>No community indicator currently available</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Community members have knowledge and skills to grow, select, and prepare nutritious food to maximize resources.</td>
<td>Increase Demand for Healthy Foods</td>
<td>Consumption of 5 servings of fruits and vegetables daily via Community Health Needs Assessment</td>
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<td>Help Food Insecure Families Stretch Their Budgets</td>
<td>Residents worry that food will run out before there is money to buy more via the Community Health Needs Assessment</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Improve Collaboration Among Service Providers</td>
<td>No indicator possible - use objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Catalyze community change around food system challenges and root causes of hunger.</td>
<td>Extend the Table Outside of the Food System</td>
<td>No indicator possible - use objectives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GOAL 1: ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS HAVE EQUITABLE AND ADEQUATE ACCESS TO NUTRITIOUS FOOD

OVERVIEW
Goal 1 focuses on ensuring every person and family in the community can access enough healthy food. In some cases food is purchased, in others it is grown for personal consumption, or accessed through pantries and meal programs. Regardless of the means of access, food should be healthy, affordable, and provided in a way that respects human dignity.

BACKGROUND
Partners have been working to improve access to healthy foods in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro for many years. For example:

- The Douglas County Health Department has been working to improve access to healthy foods in low access areas through Healthy Neighborhood Stores for a decade.
- The Omaha Plan launched collective impact initiatives in 2013 focused on improving pantry practice and data sharing, as well as school meal provision. Successes and lessons learned from those initiatives inform this plan.

Strong data systems exist to measure needs and progress in this area with the USDA providing food desert maps, the Food Bank for the Heartland assessing pantry best practice, and local health departments conducting additional assessments of access to healthy foods for purchase. United Way of the Midlands’ 2017 report on food security focused on resources related to food access.

CHALLENGES
This goal encompasses broad areas of work, which involve multiple sectors and populations. Many partners need to align their work to achieve population goals, and a multitude of strategies are needed to address diverse needs.

KEY DATA
- In the metro area, 100,810 people struggle with food security.\textsuperscript{x}
- 9% (80,568) of people in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro are living in a food desert, which is above the 4% of people living in food deserts nationwide.\textsuperscript{xi}
- 16.1% of residents find it “very” or “somewhat” difficult to access affordable fresh fruits and vegetables, whether they live in a food desert or not.\textsuperscript{xii}
- 48% of students in Douglas County qualified for either free or reduced lunch in 2014, compared to 31% in Sarpy and 41% in Pottawattamie.\textsuperscript{xiii}

PLAN HIGHLIGHTS
- The Sarpy/Cass Health Department will implement the NEMS assessment and will increase the number of producers that accept WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition vouchers.
- The Douglas County Health Department and Nebraska Grocers Association will increase the number of vendors that implement SNAP incentive programs.
- Pantry partners and Food Bank for the Heartland will launch an emergency food work group to disseminate and encourage best practices among pantries.
- Food Bank for the Heartland will expand the implementation of high-school- and middle-school-based mobile pantries within each school district.
**Goal 1:**
All community members have equitable and adequate access to nutritious food

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Priority Area For Action:</strong></th>
<th>Make Food Friendly Neighborhoods</th>
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<td><strong>Indicator:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Strategy:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Objective:</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase capacity of retail vendors to sell nutritious food</td>
<td>By 2025, implement 10 evidence based strategies in the metro area which increase the percentage of residents that have consistent access to nutritious foods for purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the capacity of gardens to provide nutritious foods for residents</td>
<td>By 2020, increase the number of community gardens within the metro area by 10%</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Priority Area For Action:</strong></th>
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<th><strong>Strategy:</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrate best practices in pantries to ensure all have access to nutritious food with dignity</td>
<td>By 2020, 25% of pantries served by the Food Bank for the Heartland will implement identified best practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure meals are available to all who are hungry</td>
<td>By January 2020, identify all meal programs in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area and create an aggregate list to be disseminated to service providers, 211 and residents in need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement best practice to improve access to school meals</td>
<td>By 2022, at least 75% of metro area school schools will implement policies to ensure all school age youth have access to a healthy breakfast and lunch during school hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement best practice to improve access to nutritious foods in non-school environments</td>
<td>By 2022, increase the number of summer meals distributed in the metro area by 10%</td>
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</table>
**GOAL 2: FOOD IS PRODUCED AND DISTRIBUTED IN WAYS THAT CREATE A SUSTAINABLE SYSTEM THAT VALUES WORKERS, CONSUMERS, AND THE LAND**

**OVERVIEW**

Community food security is “a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance, social justice, and democratic decision-making.”xiv Addressing how food is produced, distributed, and consumed – or how the food system functions – is the bedrock of creating community food security. Goal 2 focuses on ensuring the food system produces enough healthy foods to support the needs of the community today and in the future. In addition, goal 2 brings to light the myriad of ways the food system supports local economies and creates quality jobs.

**BACKGROUND**

Led by the Local Foods Coordinating Council (LFCC) – a committee of the Heartland 2050 initiative, which launched in 2016 – partners have been working to strengthen local foods systems through collaboration and policy change. In 2017, the Omaha metro was awarded a Growing Foods Connection grant to strengthen local foods systems and promote food security. This work was subsequently rolled into the LFCC. LFCC provides a natural home for goal 2. By aligning the efforts of this community food security plan with those of the regional Heartland 2050 effort, partner time is maximized and duplication is avoided. Leaders of LFCC convened the workgroup for goal 2 and will continue the work of this goal moving forward.

**CHALLENGES**

- Compared to other goals, there is less data available to measure needs and progress within goal 2.
- The strategies of goal 2 are often implemented by entrepreneurs, including farmers and small business owners. It can be difficult for these partners to find the time to participate in planning and collaborative work. This is a challenge particularly relevant in the summer months.

**KEY DATA**

- Of the 710,674 acres of farmland in Douglas, Sarpy, and Pottawattamie Counties, only 660 acres (0.09%) are dedicated to fruit and vegetable production.xv The majority of crop land in Nebraska and Iowa is dedicated to corn and soybeans for livestock feed or fuel.
- It is estimated that around 40% of all food that is produced is wasted at some stage of the food system.xvi
- In 2012, $678,000 of agricultural products were sold directly to consumers in the metro, down from $806,000 in 2007.xvii

**PLAN HIGHLIGHTS**

- LFCC will inventory land currently in food production & agriculture in our area, assess percentage of Land Bank land usable for agriculture, and calculate amount of land needed for 5% local food consumption.
- UNL Extension will inventory existing farmers/producers serving local markets.
- Lakin Campus, Food Bank for the Heartland, and Siena Francis House will create shared materials for awareness & education on Emerson Act, which extends protections for individuals and companies that donate foods.
**GOAL 2:**
Food is produced and distributed in ways that create a sustainable system that values workers, consumers, and the land

**Priority Area For Action:**
Increase Ability to Feed Ourselves as a Community

**Indicator:**
Direct-to-consumer sales via USDA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy: Conserve land for local food production</th>
<th>Objective: By the end of 2019, LFCC will complete an inventory of available land for food production and potential farmland preservation policy options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revise municipal/local government policies to create opportunities for growers</td>
<td>By the end of 2019, LFCC will have a multi-year plan on policy work for the regional food system</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implement regenerative and sustainable farming practices</td>
<td>Train 100 farmers in regenerative or sustainable farming practices by end of 2023</td>
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<td>Increase access to capital for local food production</td>
<td>In 2019-2021, Nebraska legislative biennium, pass a community garden water access bill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support local food entrepreneurs</td>
<td>By end of 2019, complete inventory of existing farmers/producers barriers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthen relationships between institutions and local food aggregators</td>
<td>Increase the number of institutional contracts between major institutions and local food aggregators by 2020</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**GOAL 2:**
Food is produced and distributed in ways that create a sustainable system that values workers, consumers, and the land

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Priority Area For Action:</th>
<th>Minimize Food Waste</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicator:</strong></td>
<td>No community indicator currently available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy:</strong></td>
<td>Improve coordination among food waste partners and volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective:</strong></td>
<td>By the end of 2019, the LFCC will convene a food waste committee to identify local food waste sources and partners who will establish a community-wide process to pick up, distribute, compost or reuse discarded food</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Generate baseline data related to food waste</td>
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<td>By December 2020, conduct a landfill waste characterization study in Douglas County</td>
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<td>Enhance awareness about protections related to donated food and minimizing food waste</td>
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<td>Policy changes to encourage food waste diversion</td>
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<td>By 2020, identify policy priorities related to food waste</td>
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<th>Expand Opportunities to Develop High Skill, High Wage Food System Jobs</th>
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<td><strong>Indicator:</strong></td>
<td>No community indicator currently available</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy:</strong></td>
<td>Collect data on local workforce food issues to inform future action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective:</strong></td>
<td>By 2020, identify workforce challenges in food sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enhance nonprofit programs impacting the food system’s workforce pipeline</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By 2020, identify workforce challenges in food sector</td>
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</tbody>
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GOAL 3: COMMUNITY MEMBERS HAVE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO GROW, SELECT, AND PREPARE NUTRITIOUS FOOD TO MAXIMIZE RESOURCES

OVERVIEW
To create a food secure community, community members need the skills to maximize their access to and consumption of nutritious foods. Skills and knowledge regarding basic nutrition, selecting healthy foods, food preparation and preservation, food safety and spoilage prevention, and cultivating foods for personal consumption all facilitate consuming healthy foods, maximizing resources, and reducing waste. In addition, food items constitute only one piece of a family budget. Budgeting skills help families make the most of available resources, and government programs, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provide additional resources for families to spend on healthy foods. Goal 3 focuses on strategies to support healthy behaviors to promote food security and healthy food consumption.

CHALLENGES
- Changing behaviors within the context of unhealthy environments is difficult. When people do not have access to healthy foods, or the means to afford them, the best intention to make healthy choices may not be enough. Making the healthy choice the easy and accessible choice is therefore a key component of success.
- Federal and state policy dictates access to nutrition assistance programs such as SNAP and WIC. Iowa and Nebraska differ in their implementation of these programs.

KEY DATA
- Only one quarter (24.6%) of metro area adults report eating five or more servings of fruits and/or vegetables per day.
- 11.3% of metro residents “often” or “sometimes” worry about food running out before having enough money to buy more. Some areas of the metro are disproportionately affected: 21.2% of residents in northeast Omaha, 15.8% of residents in southeast Omaha, and 11.6% of residents in Pottawattamie County face these worries.
- Not everyone who is eligible for benefits receives them, leaving a group of people vulnerable to hunger. In Nebraska only 72% of eligible people are enrolled in SNAP versus 92% in Iowa.

PLAN HIGHLIGHTS
- UNL Extension, Cooking Matters, and partners will create and post online a toolkit of evidence-based nutrition education to make the curriculum accessible to anyone.
- Collaborative leadership, in partnership with nutrition education experts, will convene a nutrition education steering committee to uphold best practices and streamline collaboration.
- Douglas County Community Health Improvement Plan Nutrition workgroup will educate 100% of Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area childcare centers on the concepts and content of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) program by 2025.
- Nebraska Appleseed will convene partners around hunger-related policies in Nebraska to assess statewide community needs, engage affected individuals, and identify potential solutions.
**GOAL 3:**
Community members have knowledge and skills to grow, select and prepare nutritious food to maximize resources

### Priority Area For Action:
Increase Demand for Healthy Food

**Indicator:**
Consumption of 5 serving of fruits and vegetables daily via Community Health Needs Assessment

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implement best practice in nutrition education</td>
<td>By 2020, the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area will develop an infrastructure to provide and disseminate consistent, evidence-based nutrition education programming and materials for target audiences to access and use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improve nutrition in childcare settings</td>
<td>By 2025, the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metro area will develop infrastructure to support access to and implementation of, the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) program for 100% of childcare centers specific to child nutrition and infant feeding/breastfeeding.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Build capacity of community health workers focused on food security and nutrition</td>
<td>By 2020, align and leverage the Douglas County community health worker model to Sarpy and Pottawatomie Counties to coordinate models that help build community/clinical linkages.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Leverage local food production spaces to grow, prepare, and preserve nutrient dense food</td>
<td>By January 2021, increase use of educational training opportunities around growing/cooking/preserving food by 10%.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ensure women have skills and protected opportunities to breastfeed</td>
<td>By 2020, align and leverage the activities and messages of the metro area Breastfeeding Coalitions (Douglas/Sarpy/County Breastfeeding Coalition and Southwest Iowa Breastfeeding Coalition) for coordination of resources and promotion and support of best practices to positively impact breastfeeding rates.</td>
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### Priority Area For Action:
Help Food Insecure Families Stretch Their Budgets

**Indicator:**
Residents worry that food will run out before there is enough money to buy more via the Community Health Needs Assessment

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ensure all who are eligible for assistance programs enroll and receive maximum benefit</td>
<td>By 2020, increase federal nutrition assistance program (WIC and SNAP) participation rates by 10% in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Advocate for strengthening and improving federal nutrition programs</td>
<td>By 2019, conduct one advocacy training to educate community partners, nonprofits, for profits and others regarding advocacy best practices.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strengthen partnerships between food security and financial stability efforts</td>
<td>By December 2019, develop activities to enhance partnerships.</td>
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<td>By 2020, align and leverage the activities and messages of the metro area Breastfeeding Coalitions (Douglas/Sarpy/County Breastfeeding Coalition and Southwest Iowa Breastfeeding Coalition) for coordination of resources and promotion and support of best practices to positively impact breastfeeding rates.</td>
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GOAL 4: CATALYZE COMMUNITY CHANGE AROUND FOOD SYSTEM CHALLENGES AND ROOT CAUSES OF HUNGER

OVERVIEW

A myriad of factors both within and outside of the food system impact food insecurity. These factors include poverty, transportation, education, and neighborhood resources, among others. Addressing root cause factors is essential to addressing food insecurity. Goal 4 focuses on how partners within the food system can help create change to address root causes of food insecurity outside of the food system, as well as aspects within the food system that perpetuate problems instead of driving solutions.

CHALLENGES

- Given the complexity of factors that contribute to food insecurity, working across sectors – such as healthcare, workforce development, education, and emergency food – is needed to make a long-term, sustainable impact. However, multi-sector collaboration can be challenging and time-consuming.
- Public policy change is the most impactful strategy to address the root causes of hunger. However, many organizations do not engage in lobbying and advocacy, and political pressures can make it difficult for legislation to pass.
- Misconceptions about food security and its prevalence in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area are common.

KEY DATA

- Poverty within the area is nearly 12%; however, fewer than one in ten white residents experience poverty compared to about one in four black or Latino residents. xxiv
- For workers with a high school diploma, there is a wage gap of $3.70 per hour between white workers and workers of color; for workers with a bachelor’s degree or higher, the gap is $3.00 per hour. Full-time workers of color are 2.5 times more likely to be economically insecure than white workers. xxv
- 20.1% of metro residents report “always/usually/sometimes” being worried about paying rent/mortgage. The rate is 46.8% for people living in poverty, 26.1% for people just above the poverty line, and 13.6% for middle and high income residents.xxvi
- Income inequality is rising in the metro and the middle class is shrinking as the proportion of households that are lower-income grows.xxvii
- Perceptions of poverty in Nebraska indicate that the general public does not understand the complexities surrounding poverty and food insecurity. The majority of Nebraskans view poverty as the result of “low motivation,” this perception is particularly prevalent among individuals making more than $60,000.xxviii

PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

- Partners will create a food security collaborative, which will continue to convene partners and drive forward the plan.
- Coalition for a Strong Nebraska and the Nebraska Civic Engagement table will host advocacy trainings for food partners to increase capacity to jointly advocate and lobby on key issues.
## Goal 4:
Catalyze community change around food system challenges and root causes of hunger

### Priority Area For Action:
Improve Collaboration Among Service Partners

### Indicator:
No indicator possible - use objectives

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<tr>
<td>Develop food system collaborative</td>
<td>By January 2019, launch the collaborative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central referral and navigation hub</td>
<td>By spring 2019, share the updates to 2-1-1 Helpline and improve utilization of 2-1-1 for referrals among food system partners</td>
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<td>Share and develop volunteers and champions</td>
<td>By 2021, the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area will have developed and implemented comprehensive communications plan that changes the narrative around food security for long-term sustainability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase capacity to advocate jointly on core issues</td>
<td>In the 2019 Nebraska legislative sessions engage partners across the food system in advocacy on food security issues across domains</td>
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### Priority Area For Action:
Extend the Table Outside of the Food System

### Indicator:
No indicator possible - use objectives

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<td>Tell the story through data collection and story creation, with a focus on solutions</td>
<td>By 2021, the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area will have developed and implemented comprehensive communications plan that changes the narrative around food security for long-term sustainability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support screening and referrals for food insecurity by healthcare providers</td>
<td>By January 2020, 100% of the metro area health systems, including the Federally Qualified Health Centers will screen clients for food insecurity, provide referrals support as needed and include addressing food security in their plan of care</td>
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In bringing people across the food system together to identify ongoing activities and opportunities for new or enhanced work, the planning process itself highlighted the value of creating opportunities for partners to come together to share and plan. Common to discussions throughout the planning process was the need to create an organizing body to foster collaboration and alignment of work across the food system, and to move the collective work forward past the planning period.

Launching the collaborative is the top priority of this plan. Without a central convening and engagement structure the community will struggle to achieve the collective goals and strategies defined in the plan. The relationships and trust developed and deepened through the planning process make the launch of such a collaborative possible.

The leadership structure of the planning process provides a template for an organizing body to continue to drive collective work forward. By developing a food security collaborative a formal structure will be created that looks beyond the individual missions and interests of agencies and organizations to the collective goals the community has set forth. This collaborative will continue to refine, develop, and prioritize the plan’s strategies and activities.

MOVING FORWARD

This plan represents a critical step in fostering community-wide action to address the food needs of the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area. Continuing the momentum generated through the planning process by creating the collaborative and identifying a convening organization is now the top priority. By the end of 2018, the structure for the body that will continue to drive collective work forward will be defined. A convening organization or organizations will be identified in early 2019. From there, workgroups will begin convening partners in early 2019 to continue the conversations that started through this planning process to align activities and resources to achieve the objectives set forth in the plan. In the coming year, top priorities for advancement will be defined and activities further developed. The plan will be updated and progress on indicators and objectives monitored on an annual basis.

The Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area is positioned to make a significant impact on food insecurity and access to and consumption of healthy foods. By working in partnership, we can ensure that every person in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area has access to an adequate supply of nutritious, affordable and culturally-appropriate food to be a productive member of our community.

Plan Leadership Team

Alliance for a Better Omaha
Baker’s Supermarkets
Charles Lakin Campus
City Sprouts
Douglas County Health Department
Food Bank for the Heartland
Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition
Iowa West Foundation
Latino Center of the Midlands
LiveWell Omaha
Methodist Health System
Metropolitan Area Planning Agency
No More Empty Pots
Sarpy/Cass Health Department
The 712 Initiative
The Big Garden
United Way of the Midlands
University of Nebraska
REFERENCES


